



Transforming the Rouge River Area of Concern from Mowed Down to Grown Up

In partnership with:



\$348,750 in grant funds provided by the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) through the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) & \$191,591 in match from partners

The Transforming the Rouge River AOC Project:

- Restored wetlands allowing increased capacity to store & retain storm water.
- Converted managed turf grass to native vegetation grow zones.
- Restored mowed turf grass & barren land to native vegetation grow zones.
- Restored riparian corridor, wetlands & upland habitat.

In 2010, the Alliance of Rouge Communities (ARC) received a grant from the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency, Great Lakes Restoration Initiative to conduct Transforming the Rouge AOC from Mowed Down to Grown Up (Transforming the Rouge). The Rouge River watershed is a designated Area of Concern (AOC) under the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement (GLWQA) and has three Beneficial Use Impairments (BUIs) associated with fish and wildlife habitat: Degraded Fish and Wildlife Populations, Degradation of Benthos, and Loss of Fish and Wildlife Habitat. The purpose of the Transforming the Rouge project was to restore riparian corridor, wetlands and upland habitat in the Rouge River Watershed to address the benthos BUI with the ultimate goal of delisting the Fish and Wildlife Habitat and Population BUIs.

Project Outcomes

- Seven acres of wetlands at the Valley Woods Nature Preserve in Southfield were improved by removing invasive species, re-introducing plant diversity and restoring wetland hydrology.
- Controlled burns of mowed turf grass and prairie were conducted at 10 acres in Detroit’s Eliza Howell and Rouge parks. They were both re-seeded with native plants.
- Fifteen acres of managed turf grass was converted to native plant grow zones along Wayne County’s Lower Rouge Parkway (Venoy Road and Inkster Road locations and in Lola Valley Park in Redford Township).



Valley Woods Nature Preserve controlled burn to remove invasive species



Valley Woods Nature Preserve after restoration



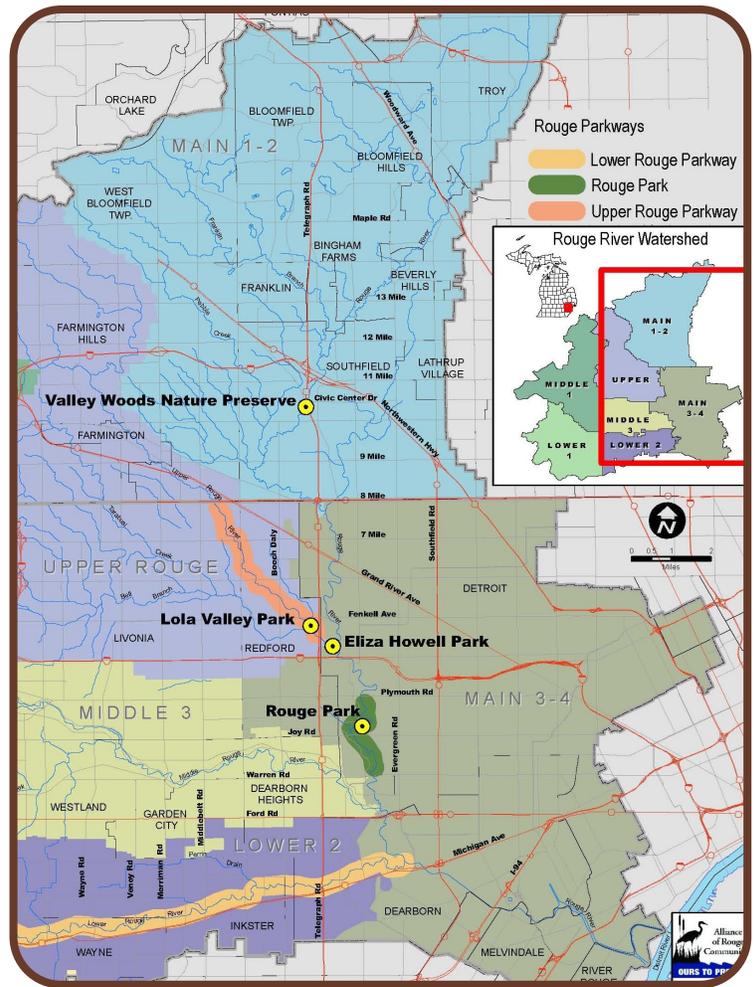
Installation of new plants at Valley Woods Nature Preserve

For more information about other ARC activities visit our website at:
www.allianceofrougecommunities.com

This project is funded through a grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (grant # GL-00E006-43)

The Transforming the Rouge project included a public education component to educate the residents living around the grow zone areas and the Valley Woods Nature Preserve as well as pre- and post- construction benthics macroinvertebrate sampling conducted by Friends of the Rouge and Wayne County.

This project has increased focus on the benefits of native areas and habitat. A Detroit Public Schools program by a local stewardship group expanded from two classrooms to 10 classrooms in Detroit's Rouge Park since the prairie was restored in 2012 and students visit the restored prairie throughout the school year to document seasonal changes. Wild turkeys and coyotes were observed in Rouge Park in 2012 and a Blue Heron rookery is thriving in Rouge Park. At the Valley Woods Wetlands in Southfield, increased wildlife usage - whitetail deer, great blue herons and coyotes - have been observed. Since the native areas were restored, there is an increase in butterflies in Detroit's Eliza Howell and Rouge parks and there are more butterfly and bird watching events at Eliza Howell Park. Sensitive stoneflies have been observed hatching in the channelized portion of the lower portion of the Rouge Main Branch, downstream of three of the Transforming the Rouge projects.



Wayne County's Lower Rouge Parkway after restoration



Black Swallowtail on butterfly milkweed in Rouge Park, Detroit



Students assisting in the seeding at Rouge Park, Detroit

About the Alliance of Rouge Communities

The ARC is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization consisting of local municipalities, counties, educational institutions and stewardship groups working together to improve the Rouge River. Founded in 2005, the ARC is funded by membership dues from local governments and supported by grants. The ARC and its partners work cooperatively to meet water quality requirements mandated by the state's stormwater permit and to restore beneficial uses, such as canoeing, fishing and other recreational activities, to the Rouge River. That means better water quality for less cost to its members!

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